

ANSWER TO A HAND-BILL,

ADDRESSED TO THE

BRITISH ARMY;

Found on the 21st of May, 1797, in the Marine Barracks,

CHATHAM.

AS we know not who you are that have taken the Liberty to address us as BRETHREN; but from the Tenor of whose Address we have every Reason to disown as such—yet, lest you might be led to imagine from our Silence, that we, in the smallest Degree, acquiesce in your Sentiments, we consider it necessary, for the Establishment of our own Honour, to reply to your several Observations.

You say—"Are we not Men?"

We are Men;—we know it;—and should the Enemies of our KING, our COUNTRY, or CONSTITUTION, (either foreign or domestic) ever oppose us, we will prove ourselves such; we should only lose our natural Claim to the Name of Man, did we ever, in the smallest Degree, swerve from that Fidelity and Attachment which we owe to our beloved SOVEREIGN and to our Country.

You ask us—"Are we any where respected as Men?"

Yes; we are not only respected as Men, but, by every good Man, regarded as the Protectors of our Country: If there are any Class of Men who hold us not in proper Respect, we are well assured it is only those, who, lost to every Sense of Virtue, and blind to the real Interests of their Country, endeavour to disseminate Principles of *Jacobinism* and *Sedition*, with a View to destroy that Constitution and Government which have so long been the Admiration of surrounding Nations, and to introduce a System of Anarchy and Confusion, by which alone their diabolical Schemes of Murder, Rapine, and Plunder, can be brought to bear;—*but we are united, and resolved to shed the last Drop of our Blood in the Opposition of such detestable Doctrines; and such, we trust, is the Resolution of all our virtuous Brethren.*

You say—"Wrong Notions of Discipline have led us to be despised."

We, as good Soldiers, glory in proper Discipline, and in paying that necessary and proper Obedience to the Commands of our Officers, who treat us with all the Respect and humane Attention that every good Soldier deserves.

We believe, and the Officers acknowledge, that Serjeants are a principal Spring in the Military Machine; but that is no Argument that the Army could act as well, *or indeed could exist at all*, without Superior and Commissioned Officers; they only form one of the Gradations of Rank necessary to the well being of the Whole.

We place every Dependence in the Wisdom of his MAJESTY and PARLIAMENT for the Amelioration of our Situation; and we have every Reason to be satisfied with their declared Intentions in our Favour.

We know, by Experience, that Barracks are far better for us than Quarters, where a Want of the necessary Conveniences for Soldiers used to cause us much Trouble; but in Barracks we have every Thing convenient.

We acknowledge, that a great Number of our Brother Soldiers are harrassed, by long Marches, through the Country, but it is to prevent the base Designs of the disaffected and disloyal, who endeavour to disorganize the Army, unhinge the Constitution, and strike at the very Vitals of all good Government.—And you ask us,—"*that labouring under so many Grievances, What are we to do?*"—We briefly answer, *OUR DUTY as Soldiers, and not as Slaves*, in protecting our KING and COUNTRY, to which we have bound ourselves by a just and voluntary Obligation.

You desire us, in Conclusion,—"*To be Sober, to be READY.*"

We will be sober and ready, but it will be in the Opposition of all such insidious Endeavours to poison our Minds, and to make us throw off that necessary Obedience and Respect to the just and legal Commands of our Officers, whom we Love and Respect, and to the *Chief of whom, in this Division, we have every Reason to pay the highest Degree of Veneration.*

Cease, therefore, your vile Endeavours to poison our Minds; for we are too steadily attached to our COUNTRY, to our KING, and to our CONSTITUTION, ever to be led astray by such absurd and wicked Attempts.

Signed, by all the Non-Commissioned Officers at the Division, on Behalf of themselves and the private Men of their respective Companies.

MARINE BARRACKS, CHATHAM, May 23, 1797.